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NOTE BY THE SECRETARIES

to the

JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

on

GUIDANCE CONCERNING AIR ACCESS TO BERLIN (U)

The enclosed memorandum by the Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force, CSAFM 94-58, dated 26 March 1958, is referred hereby to the Joint Strategic Plans Committee for comment and recommendation as a matter of priority.

R. D. WENTWORTH,
H. L. HILLYARD,
Joint Secretariat.

DECLASSIFIED BY:
JCS DECLASSIFICATION BRANCH
DATE 40 April 1979

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ENCLOSURE

MEMORANDUM BY THE CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. AIR FORCE

for the
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

on

GUIDANCE CONCERNING AIR ACCESS TO BERLIN (U)

CSAFM 94-58

26 March 1958

1. For a number of years, the USSR has attempted to construe quadripartite agreements as establishing an upper limit of 10,000 feet on the Berlin Air Corridors. It is the established position of the United States, the United Kingdom and France that, although the quadripartite traffic control agency operates only up to 10,000 feet, the Berlin corridors are unlimited in altitude insofar as rights of use are concerned.

2. The three Western Powers have not frequently employed altitudes above 10,000 feet in the Berlin corridor, primarily because there has been no important advantage in such flights with the type of aircraft serving Berlin. However, with the introduction of the C-130 turboprop aircraft into USAF, corridor flights at altitudes considerably in excess of 10,000 feet are necessary to avoid inefficiencies as obvious to the Soviets as to ourselves. I consider that, in such circumstances, failure to initiate regular corridor flights above 10,000 feet at an early date would constitute acceptance of yet another unjustified Soviet limitation on our Berlin rights.

3. In view of the Soviet position on corridor flights above 10,000 feet, and the fact that it has not been our custom to conduct such flights, the possibility of strong Soviet reaction should be recognized. Appropriate sureness and promptness of United States action in the situations which might then develop require that we determine the nature of that action in advance.

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4. I believe that, in addition to dealing with the specific problem of corridor flights above 10,000 feet, we must recognize the continued possibility of a more general Soviet attempt to unacceptably restrict or directly prevent Western air access to Berlin. USCINCEUR has stated that contingency planning in this respect appears timely and has requested* current planning guidance relative to Berlin air access problems including measures to be taken in the event of overt acts of interference by the Soviets or East Germans with Allied air access.

5. In view of the above, I recommend that the Joint Chiefs of Staff establish now a position on the nature and scope of U.S. action to counter Soviet encroachment on our rights of air access to Berlin.

* USCINCEUR Message EC 9-636, DTG 061631Z February 1958,
(DATA 01000)